



City Of Norwich

Office of the Mayor

Peter Albert Nystrom

Chairman Sen. Steven Cassano:

Chairman Rep. Jason Rojas:

My name is Peter Albert Nystrom, and I am the Mayor of the City of Norwich. From 1985 through 2002 I had the honor of serving here in the general assembly as the 46th District House Representative. As you may be aware, Norwich owns and operates our own four service utility company called Norwich Public Utilities or NPU. The legislation being debated today in this committee poses a direct threat to the sewer division of NPU.

Over 100 years ago, Norwich leaders had the foresight to establish a municipal utility company that would work for the betterment of the city. Generations have invested in and built upon this important asset. In essence, NPU was built by Norwich citizens, for Norwich Citizens.

Today, NPU plays a vital role in the renaissance of Norwich. Their presence helps retain and attract new businesses and residents of Norwich are comforted in the safe, reliable, and cost-effective service supplied by NPU every day. One needs only to point to NPU's response to the rash of major weather disasters in recent years to understand the benefits of having a utility that is owned by the citizens.

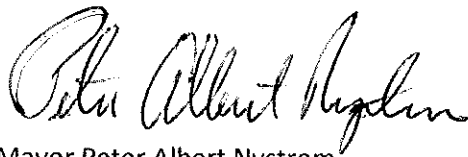
The legislation that is being presented today would allow outside interests decide what Norwich is allowed to do with its own utility company. Norwich has generously provided services to other communities to help them solve some of their public challenges. Sewer service is one of those challenges. If every community that Norwich serves with sewer were forced to build a wastewater system from scratch, it would cost them each tens of millions of dollars. Those expenses have been avoided because Norwich has been generous enough to allow these communities to access our assets.

The towns of Bozrah, Franklin, Preston and Sprague need expanded sewer treatment capacity in southeastern Connecticut. The recently upgraded CEDS report put together with the assistance of SECTOR and the Council of Government of Southeastern Connecticut calls for such regional cooperation. The Norwich Public Utility has already entered into these discussions.

This regional solution balances the needs of the hope of expanding business opportunities in these towns with the ability to pay for the cost of upgrading the sewer treatment plant. Passage of this proposed bill will eliminate or substantially diminish the ability to pay for said improvements as it will restrict the required use of a reliable rate structure as required by state regulation. If this occurs this financial burden ultimately would fall solely on the taxpayers of the City of Norwich.

A member of this committee is the Chief Executive of one these communities that Norwich serves with sewer. This community is currently suing the people of Norwich over rates. State statutes allows them to do so and I'm not here to comment on the merits of this litigation. I will point out, however, that if any of the communities that take advantage of this Norwich asset are no longer happy with how they are being treated, they are free to pursue other options. We as a city will not allow any other community or public official to dictate to us how we operate our utility. Generations of Norwich citizens have built and paid for NPU and we will maintain our ability to protect it for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Peter Albert Nystrom".

Mayor Peter Albert Nystrom

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